

**CITY OF CHARLEVOIX
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, September 10, 2012 - 7:00 p.m.**

210 State Street, City Hall, 2nd Floor Council Chambers, Charlevoix, MI

(A) CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Hess at 7:03 p.m.

(B) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(C) ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair John Hess, Francis Flanders, Becky Doan, Judy Clock, John Elzinga, Sherm Chamberlain, Larry Boog, Dan Buday (arr. 7:05)

Members Absent: Toni Felter

Staff Present: City Planner Michael Spencer

Clerk: City Clerk Carol A. Ochs

(D) INQUIRY INTO POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

(E) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hess recommended discussing the fireplace item before the zoning ordinance item. There were no objections.

(F) PRESENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP ASSESSMENT

Patty O'Donnell, Regional Planner with the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCG), presented the City of Charlevoix Environmental Stewardship Assessment. This is a project using a Coastal Management Assessment grant the NWMCG received to work with the 11 coastal communities in their 10 counties from Emmet to Manistee and do Environmental Stewardship Assessments for each of those local governments as the first part of the grant. The second part of the grant will be to develop an economic development strategy for the City based on protecting its natural resources. Ms. O'Donnell briefly reviewed the assessment and Chair Hess thanked Ms. O'Donnell.

(G) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the August 13, 2012 minutes.

Motion by Chamberlain, second by Flanders, that the August 13, 2012 minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

(H) NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on the Fireplace in East Park

Chair Hess informed the audience that the Planning Commission may or may not make a decision tonight. The Chair reviewed the guidelines for making comments.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment regarding the fireplace in East Park at 7:10 p.m.

Delbert R. "Chip" Terrill said that accepting this donation sets bad precedent for the future. He is against memorials in valuable green space and thinks the Commission should look at the funding for this proposal. The donor is not giving the money directly to Charlevoix; the money is going through a foundation that may be a 501c3, allowing the donor to take a tax deduction. This means the taxpayers of this country are subsidizing this fireplace. Additionally, the fireplace becomes an unfunded mandate of \$6,000 a year to the City and taxpayers of this town. Natural gas prices are at a low right now, but Mr. Terrill is concerned about increases to gas prices over the long term.

Karen Pierce said she had spoken previously at the City Council meeting, at which time she was mostly concerned about the location of the fireplace and the obstructed views. She didn't realize at that time that the donor had originally wanted to give his money for something totally different, and suggested we go back to what the donor originally wanted. She also wonders, since she has heard that the fireplace will not be putting off much heat, why we should have a fireplace. If the fireplace is truly aesthetic, and costs \$6,000+ a year, she would rather see the money go toward

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infrastructure around the City. Other people in the community can't afford their own gas bills. Originally, Ms. Pierce was in favor of moving the fireplace; now she would rather see it taken down. The forefathers had a vision of this town with unobstructed views. Some people only have time to view the harbor when they drive through town, because they can't always get downtown.

John Campbell said he was concerned about both the process and the lack of process in regards to this element in East Park. As a community, we spent seven years getting a plan put together. We had a great leader in Peter Pollack [the park architect]. Three walkways to view the three vistas was the basis of the design for the East Park. The public hearings over those seven years provided for a lot of input from the community. Mr. Campbell said he is a member of the Shade Tree Commission. A little over 20 years ago, the Lion's Club of Charlevoix donated trees to the City and they were planted. Six thousand dollars a year to put gases in the air doesn't sound environmentally responsible. The City has spent a lot of time and effort to save energy, not just throw it up into the air. We have no money for trees and we haven't planted any trees, which keep the downtown cool in the summer.

Leon Perron spoke regarding the issue of the cost to date which seems to be on some people's minds. He doesn't feel this should be a factor at all. He doesn't know how much discussion was involved concerning the \$7,000 cost per year in fossil fuel when this was pushed through. The people of Charlevoix love that park. There is not going to be any uprising or squabble about the money spent in that park. There may be some problems with the cost of the fuel. He thinks actual improvements to the park that are not out of the ordinary would be welcome. Mr. Perron proposed knocking the top blocks off the existing structure; it would be a beautiful place for flowers or plantings or a statue of Father Charlevoix. He doesn't think the money spent so far is an issue; in his opinion, it's a mistake that can be handled easily.

John Winn clarified that the gentleman who is interested in funding the fireplace had originally called to donate a couple of thousand dollars to the water fountain, but that project was closed. This project came up and he had an interest in it. Obviously, it is a lot more money than he had planned on donating to the water fountain. The City was probably optimistic on the amount of gas the fireplace would use, but the more gas you think you're going to use, the less it costs to run line, which is why the line only costs \$300. The electric bill to run the fountain is more than the projected gas cost on the fireplace all winter long. The same people who are complaining about the fireplace complained about the marina and the park. A referendum had to be done, and Mr. Winn knocked on doors for three weeks to get [the park] on the ballot. Some people just can't visualize change. Mr. Winn still believes it is the vocal minority trying to control the silent majority. After last week's [Council] meeting, Mr. Winn said he had countless calls from people telling him they thought it was a great idea but they are probably not going to come to Wednesday's meeting. The fireplace is an eight foot wide structure in a three block area: .00125% of the entire park. He thinks it will help the merchants and enhance the downtown area. He doesn't know what makes Charlevoix so different from Holland and Holland's fireplace is beautiful. Their city manager said everybody loves it. Mr. Winn thinks it will be an addition to the community and will end up being just like the marina, park and the fountain once it's done: People will love it.

Jean Morrow said that when she heard about the fireplace, her initial thought was that she didn't know people could buy a piece of the park. If you give someone the right to put up a monument, where will it stop? It's going to set a precedent. The Holland fireplace is beautiful, but they don't have our waterfront and beautiful park. Their fireplace is not blocking anything. Mr. Winn also mentioned at the [Council] meeting that the eight foot fireplace was just a fraction of our view and that the semis and cars that go by actually obstruct the view more than that. However, vehicles don't sit there 24/7, 365 days a year; they're moving on. Ms. Morrow doesn't think it's right for us to sell our property.

Shirley Gibson said that she thinks good people make mistakes. A mistake has been made and it should be corrected. She is not in favor of a fireplace anywhere in the park.

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Linda Teezak said that she is not one of the people who objects about everything. She objects that this project didn't go through the right channels. The Planning Commission, when they made that beautiful park, wanted to make it open for everybody. Everyone she has talked with disagrees with the fireplace. This is not Holland, it's Charlevoix. The City Planning and Zoning Commission has worked hard to keep all the trees down there, to help keep Charlevoix green. Everyone is saying "keep our cities green" and this fossil fuel is a waste of energy. A memorial would have been better with a plaque and money going to the hospital or something for the homeless. Not a huge monstrosity down town. Even if it's not huge, it's out of place. The park should be left open, and the planning was not done through proper channels.

Gabe Campbell said that he thinks it's strange that we ask people to shut their motor down while they're waiting for the bridge and we're going to be burning fuel, probably right next to the sign. Mr. Campbell thinks good people make mistakes and he thinks the fireplace was a mistake. He stated that he has never seen the people with so much animosity. Mr. Campbell thinks the people behind the project were trying to do something nice, but they jumped into it, and lot of times when you jump into something you kind of wish you hadn't. At the very least, Mr. Campbell thinks the fireplace should be tabled and looked at. Mr. Campbell believes the fireplace should be removed.

Ann Henrickson said she agrees the center of the lake is majestic. She likes the idea if the fireplace could be moved down by the stop light and thinks it would be a nice addition there, if it were a little lower. She thinks this is an opportunity to look at both sides. She would never want to obstruct the view: It is the way it should be forever. She thinks if the people would entertain the thought of the donor giving us something and paying for the expenses, and we had a fireplace down by the stoplight where the seating is, it might be something all could enjoy. Options should be looked at instead of being negative about everything. Maybe the architect and the donor can work together to move and lower the fireplace, which might enhance the waterfront.

Judy Weinberg asked if the donor would be willing to redirect his kindness toward other needs in this City. She doesn't understand the purpose of the fireplace or why it is needed. She is against the fireplace in the middle of the park.

Jeff Porter said that he was a member of the DDA for a long time and was involved in planning both Bridge and East Parks. He suggested making sight lines to get an idea of the property and having someone erect a wooden frame with the fireplace dimensions to see what the fireplace looks like. If that was done, he is sure most people would be against this fireplace.

Susan English thinks the donor had all the best intentions and was motivated by love and loss. Mr. Winn and the City Council did nothing but react to that emotion in a human way and tried to move that donation forward in an expedient manner. She thinks having a fireplace is a reasonable expression; however, the location on the sidewalk would obstruct the view, which is the center planning concept of the park. She believes a fireplace at either the north or south end of park, which are not as heavily used, would be lovely. Having a feature like a fireplace could be a good thing for the park, but it definitely needs to be relocated and maybe scaled differently. Materials that have been procured or reserved could be reused. A lot of the efforts and planning that have already gone into this may be salvageable. If we relocate it to another place in the park which would be more beneficial and preserve our sight lines, we could get a happy ending for everyone who has put so much effort into this. She doesn't see anything wrong with a memorial in the park as long as it is not in conflict with the initial design concepts of the park.

Art Nash asked if the Commission or the City have a policy regarding memorials in the Park. The City Manager stated that, to his knowledge, there is no policy on memorials in any park or on any City-owned property. Mr. Nash suggested that the Planning Commission, in conjunction with the City, develop a policy on memorials for the park so that it's in sync with everything that was originally planned in the park and with what the people want it to continue to be. It would be a great idea, not only to have a policy, but also for the Planning Commission and City Council to

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hold public hearings to get ideas and develop a list on how people can give memorial items appropriate to the park.

Bob Bergmann agreed that a policy would be a great start so the City doesn't run into this problem in the future. Everyone is at fault here: Council for not notifying and involving the Planning Commission; Mr. Winn for not getting a site plan to scale. Mr. Bergmann's main concern is the precedent the City would be setting down the road if this 20 foot tall, 8 foot wide fireplace were put in the park as a memorial for someone: that it will open the door for other memorials in the future. The view in the park is probably the most beautiful view in the State of Michigan. Mr. Bergmann stated, "Please don't change it."

Planner Spencer stated that the Commission had received a letter from Marilyn Gibbons and an email from Jodi Bingham opposing the fireplace. The Chair acknowledged receipt of the letters and the Commissioners confirmed they had reviewed them.

June Cross said she was happy to see the fireplace at the Planning Commission. If Council had followed procedure, the people wouldn't be arguing all this. This should have gone through the DDA, but the Enabling Act said that the City must go before the Planning Commission on something that's going on in the park. That wasn't done, and it's created a problem. Ms. Cross had understood that, when they did the park and put the fountain in, nothing else would go in the park, rather, it would be left so everybody could see the water. East Park is not a memorial park; it's a people's park. You might have a memorial on a bench or something, but Ms. Cross thinks the fireplace is ugly.

Mr. Terrill remembered the remarks of Councilmember Jill Picha. She brought home that everyone is at fault here. She was rightfully angry because the citizens are not more involved. Mr. Terrill recalls the expanse and the original proposals for the harbor. He had been very concerned that the lake was going to become a harbor. Mr. Terrill said he does object to things that are critical to this town, but he doesn't object to everything. The process for how large the harbor was going to be was important and we ended up with a good mediation and settlement as a result. Process is important for all of us to bring our minds together and end up with a good result. That's why the lack of process here was so problematic. Mr. Terrill thinks, since we have the fireplace foundation in place, the donor can have a memorial, but it could be a petunia planter with the Onaway stone. The City preserves the vista, the donor gets his memorial, and it's consistent with the look of Charlevoix.

The Chair thanked audience for acting civilly. The Chair closed the item to public comment at 7:45 p.m.

The Chair opened the item to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Dan Buday said that he agreed with most of the comments made. It should have gone through the Planning Commission so these issues could have been addressed in public.

Commissioner Judy Clock reported that when she first heard about the fireplace, she thought "How dangerous. Someone could throw stuff in it, cause fires, throw firecrackers in it." Then her thoughts went to the cost, not only of the gas, but also of the increased insurance cost to the City. Eventually the City will decide it's not worth the cost anymore, it will be shut down, and the City will be left with this chimney sitting there.

Commissioner Francis Flanders said he would like to start over, open it up for public comment, research it, get the information, and make it available to the people. If the people don't want it, then it shouldn't happen. It doesn't affect Mr. Flanders one way or the other, but he thinks the City hurried the process. He thinks part of the animosity is because it happened too quickly. This is the first time the Planning Commission has looked at this item. The Planning Commission may move slowly, but that's good. If the Planning Commission needs to have an extra hearing, there

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will be a hearing. The Planning Commission doesn't make everybody happy, but does listen. That's what needs to happen with the fireplace.

Commissioner Sherm Chamberlain said he had committed a lot of time to the park. The comments that usually came up during the public hearings he sat through were: keep it terraced, keep it green, keep it open. This proposal for the fireplace is inconsistent with those points expressed by the public. The park was a separate project than the marina. The marina was mostly financed by the Waterways Commission; the City paid for the park. The fireplace is inconsistent with the goals the public wanted for the park.

Commissioner Becky Doan is concerned about not going through proper process. She would like to see it start from the beginning. Ms. Doan likes the idea of having a policy about memorials in the park and having a list of appropriate memorial items. She would like to see if that's something we can look into, especially if there's cost involved. Ms. Doan said that she's not against fireplace, but would like more information and more input from the public.

Commissioner Larry Boog asked for clarification regarding the size of the fireplace in Holland. He has heard that the one in Holland is not obstructing any view of any waterfront and that the proposed fireplace isn't as large as the one in Holland. Mr. Winn said that the width is about the same and the Holland fireplace is about a foot taller. Mr. Boog said part of his concern is what the City could accept as a memorial in its parks. This is something the City has to be very careful and more definitive of. Mr. Boog also expressed concern for the location, cost of fuel, and loss of shade.

Commissioner John Elzinga said he had been out of town, but that he would like to hear both sides of the issue and what's going on.

Chair John Hess said he was concerned with the process: The City should have a good process. This is something that is going to be around 50-100 years and when you have something that large that is going to be there that long, you should take time and look at it and make sure it's proper. Mr. Hess likes Mr. Porter's idea of making silhouettes that could be placed anywhere in the park to take a look at. He thinks the silhouettes are a good idea, not just for this project, but for every project. In regards to the eight foot segment, Mr. Hess compared the project's impact to a slice of bread from a loaf. Others come in with their slices of bread, and pretty soon you have a whole loaf, but it's each little slice of bread that made the difference. That's why we need to look at each slice of bread and make sure it's done properly, so we don't wind up with a whole loaf.

The Chair reviewed the Planning Commission's various options, reminding the audience that the Planning Commission doesn't make the decision. The Planning Commission is a recommending body: They recommend to the City Council what they think and how they feel about something. The Council will then take up the Planning Commission's recommendations and reasons and try to make an informed decision themselves.

Motion by Flanders, second by Doan, to postpone the decision on the fireplace for additional research, information, and public comments.

The voice vote was unclear; the Chair called the vote again by a show of hands.

Motion carried, 6-2.

The Planner asked for clarification regarding the type of information Mr. Flanders was looking for. Mr. Flanders asked for real information on gas usage, insurance, and the possibility of getting a silhouette.

The Manager said that the price provided for the gas was a fairly accurate estimate of the cost of gas per year. The cost is based on the number of hours of usage, and the hours were calculated based on the seasons. The calculations come to about 1,700 hours per year, and at current rates,

would be about \$6,700 per year. As Mr. Terrill pointed out, the possibility of the costs of natural gas increasing should be taken into consideration.

Chair Hess called a recess at 8:05 p.m. The Commission reconvened at 8:07 p.m.

(I) OLD BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing on the 2012 Draft Zoning Ordinance

a. Staff Presentation

City Planner Mike Spencer said that, because it was still early in the process, his office had received limited comments. Additionally, staff still needs to send out notifications to specific property owners regarding zone changes. Mr. Spencer recommended focusing tonight's meeting on taking public comments and reviewing the proposed zoning map to see if the Planning Commission is supportive of the proposed zone changes. If the Planning Commission is supportive of the changes, staff can notify property owners, inviting them to the public hearing at the next meeting. Mr. Spencer acknowledged that the draft ordinance is not a finished or perfect product, and he has already come across some things that need to be changed. Mr. Spener is hoping the Commission can work through some of those issues in addition to inviting the public into the process. Hopefully, the finished product will be a better ordinance as a result. He recommends at least one more public hearing and possibly some work sessions after that before making changes. Mr. Spencer advised the Commission to take public comment, look at the land use map, look at any issues, and have Mr. Spencer do additional research if they desire. Staff will not be making any changes. Every change moving forward will be done by the Planning Commission.

b. Public Hearing – Call for Public Comment

The Chair opened the public hearing at 8:13 p.m.

Traver Wood from Site Planning Development said he had some observations, which the Commission need not discuss tonight. He will give his written comments to the Planner after the meeting.

- Building height – there is no provision for a walkout basement. It may be intentional. How will that be dealt with?
- Boathouses – regarding height: it will be measured from the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM). This is intended to control height, however, currently bulkheads on Round Lake are 2-3 feet above the OHWM. Mr. Wood proposes measuring from the tops of the bulkheads.
- Section 5.64 regarding grading – There is a 2 foot limit above the adjoining property. Where on the adjoining property is that measured from? The low place or high place?
- Also in Section 5.64 – There are references to the City engineering standards, City's building official, and City issuing certificates of occupancy. Should this actually be the County? *The Planner confirmed that this is intended to be the County.*
- Site Plan Review – Building size is predicated on the number of square feet. Does this mean footprint or square feet as defined elsewhere in the proposed ordinance?
- Home Occupation: Major – Curious about examples of Major Home Occupations.
- Lot of Record refers to City Register of Deeds – Once again, should probably be County.
- Definition of structure – Parking lot is defined as a structure by specific reference. Are sidewalks? Anything else that's laid or poured or made at grade? This is a significant change from before.
- Section 4.b.2. – References to parking area. Ordinance defines parking lot and parking space, not parking area.
- Temporary buildings are required to have a zoning permit. If contractors do a one or two week job, will they be required to get permits for porta-potties? *The Planner said that was not the intent, referring to the current example of the greenhouse on Bridge Street being a temporary building.*

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- Section 5.8 – Landscape requirements. Isn't clear whether that only applies to projects in C1, CBD, and PO.
- Pervious vs. Impervious pavement –Don't know if you need to add a definition, but maybe there could be a way to encourage pervious pavement.

June Cross observations:

- Setbacks should include not only the top of the structure, but should also apply to the basements and underground structures as well.
- Dilapidated, abandoned homes that are falling down and becoming hazardous – There is nothing in the ordinance to take care of them. *The Planner stated that some cities have blight ordinances that are outside of zoning. When you deal with blighted or condemned structures and if you have a provision in zoning, then grandfathering applies and limits the city's ability to do anything. What communities usually do is adopt property maintenance codes or rental inspection programs – a couple of ways for cities to deal with dilapidated structures, but they are outside of zoning. There is language in the City's Master Plan about pursuing those types of programs; however, the Planner recommends to do that outside of zoning.*

Larry Sullivan stated he is in the process of reviewing the ordinance, but hasn't gotten through all of it. He said there have been a number of interpretations made by the Zoning Board of Appeals over time. The Commission should consider whether or not those interpretations would still apply following the adoption of a new ordinance, or whether the purpose, in part, of adopting a new ordinance is to address those issues and make those interpretations a moot point.

Michael Esposito, President of Irish Boat Shop, provided comments on paper and made the following observations:

- Primary concern is that the Commission does not rush the process. It is a huge project.
- Concerned with Irish's Ferry Avenue property, which is zoned marine commercial. Under the proposed ordinance, the property would also be within a new overlay district. Mr. Esposito is concerned that the overlay district only applies to three properties. He thinks this is spot zoning to the Irish property, because not much can be built on the other two properties, unless something dramatic changes. The primary concern with the overlay district is a 50% lot coverage limit that was previously zero under marine commercial. Part of that concern is because coverage now includes driveways, parking spaces, patios, decks, – anything covered – which almost makes that piece of property unusable when you try to make something that would fit there and accommodate all the requirements. He is strongly opposed to that.
- The overlay district would make the three existing properties non-conforming.
- The 50% coverage limit would reduce the value of the property.
- Landscaping section – Screening may actually inhibit the view you're trying to save somewhere else.
- Canopy trees in the parking lot – Need to consider differences between parking lots on waterfront vs. those elsewhere.
- Building appearance – Section seems incomplete. Looking at the Irish property, a building there would be limited to stone and brick. Doesn't make sense there, as there isn't any stone and brick already existing there to match. Not much in that area is stone or brick sided.

John Campbell spoke regarding impervious as opposed to pervious paving. The City does a tremendous job in keeping the streets clean and trying to keep material from going into the storm sewer and Round Lake. Mr. Campbell gave examples of several places around town with on-site drainage. These are good avenues to follow.

The Planner clarified that the highlighted sections of the ordinance, such as the landscaping and building appearance sections, are highlighted to draw attention to them because they're

new to Charlevoix. Some sections may or may not be appropriate for Charlevoix. The Planning Commission can scale back requirements that they think are too restrictive or change those they think aren't restrictive enough.

Mary Eveleigh observations:

- The Planning Commission should take the existing ordinances and compare the new definitions to the old ones. Some definitions that were adopted in 2010 and 2011 are not a part of the new definitions. She thinks they should start at the very beginning with definitions, so that when they get into the ordinance they have a clear idea of what those definitions are, then go into the more specific.
- All zones should have restrictions in landscaping.
- The non-conforming section should be tightened a little more: We have worked hard on restrictions to protect what we have here.

The Planner answered questions about the approval schedule. The Chair clarified that the Planning Commission would not be rushing through the process. They want to have a good product.

Richard Hodgson from the Irish Boat Shop Board of Directors stated that, as part of the overlay district, the site design requirement vaguely refers to maintaining a view with any development. He would like to see the vague language of that requirement reworded or removed.

The Chair closed the public hearing at 8:34 p.m.

The Planner admitted that, in hindsight, the original approval schedule was a little aggressive. The intent behind the aggressive schedule was not to put pressure on Planning, but out of eagerness to have a newer, better ordinance both for enforcement and project planning purposes. The Planning Commission can take all the time they need.

c. Discussion on the 2012 Draft Zoning Ordinance

The Planner discussed the zoning map. Staff is going to generate a black and white map that will detail which parcels are looking at zoning changes. He would like the Commissioners to go through the map, and to know not only what the zone change is, but also why we're looking at the zone change. Commissioners should contact the Planner directly if they have questions regarding the logic behind the changes. The Planner would like the Commission to concentrate on those zone changes at the next meeting and invite the property owners to that public hearing to be a part of that process.

d. Recommendation: Set a second public hearing date for October 8, 2012

There was some discussion regarding procedure. It was generally agreed that there will be a public hearing at the next meeting, after which the Planning Commission would have some work sessions and come up with a second draft. At that time they will probably have another public hearing or at least take more public comment before going to Council.

Motion by Doan, second by Chamberlain, to set a public hearing on the 2012 draft zoning ordinance for Monday, October 8, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of City Hall. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

(J) CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair called for public comment not related to agenda items at 8:44 p.m. There were no comments.

(K) STAFF UPDATES

The Planner asked the Commission about the letter from Denny Jason regarding the County Planning Office. The Planner personally thinks that we need to have a County Planning Department; the need

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for coordinated planning and zoning is important. Most counties in Northwest Michigan do have County Planning departments. This is a major change the County is proposing. Mr. Spencer understands that governments are under financial duress, but the County does not have any funding available for even a consultant if they have a situation where they need another opinion or an experienced planner. Mr. Spencer asked if the Commission would like him to draft a letter for the Chair to sign requesting that either a professional planner be worked into the budget and kept, or that funding be made available for a planning consultant when they need it.

Current Planning Director Larry Sullivan answered some basic questions about County Planning, but said that he had not been involved in the discussions regarding planning. At the time Mr. Sullivan announced his retirement, the County Board of Commissioners met and made the decision to eliminate the Planning Director, but retain the department with the planning office administrative assistant. The current assistant has been in the position 10 years, but is not a licensed planning professional. Mr. Sullivan expressed concerns about using a consulting firm. His personal recommendation would be to have a person with planning background and experience at the County Department to provide assistance to the local units of government.

Chair Hess stated that the County Planning Department is absolutely necessary, and over the years has provided a lot of information, especially for the townships. The townships don't have the background to deal with zoning and planning, and they need professional help from time to time. Mr. Hess thinks an outside person doesn't have the compassion for the community and the area because they are not invested in and don't understand the community. Mr. Hess also expressed concern for the assistant's credentials being put under scrutiny in court.

Commissioner Chamberlain spoke regarding the need to consolidate services and perhaps the County could have a joint Planning/Economic Development specialist.

Commissioner Buday expressed concern that the safety of the people would be compromised if we don't have someone with the right skills in the position. The safety of the people should come first. Additionally, the legal cost to the County could be substantial.

Commissioner Clock stated that, in the long run, a consultant would end up costing more money. Mr. Buday agreed it was a bad business decision.

There was concern expressed by some Commissioners about sending a letter on behalf of the whole Commission. The Planner proposed the Commissioners could write individual letters expressing their individual concerns and ideas. He will do the same as the City Planner. He encouraged the Commissioners to pay attention to the budget timelines for the County.

The Clerk briefly reviewed the procedures for a joint meeting with Council.

The Clerk also stated that, although the minutes from the September 4 Council meeting are not yet complete, an audio file is available if Commissioners would like to listen to it.

(L) REQUESTS FOR NEXT MONTH'S AGENDA OR RESEARCH ITEMS

None.

(M) ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Chamberlain, second by Buday, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

John Hess, Chairperson

Carol A. Ochs, City Clerk